

JUDAISM



Judaism is with ca. 14 million members both the oldest and smallest monotheistic religion.



The Jews dispersed all over the world, outside of Israel, constitute the 'diaspora'. Some Jews are Zionists, which means they support a Jewish nation state in Zion, another word for Jerusalem.



Judaism has a decentralized structure, with many different branches or denominations, from ultra-Orthodox to Liberal. Each denomination has its own institutions and religious leaders.



Because of its decentralized structure, Judaism offers no uniform way of approaching **contemporary challenges**:

Sacred Texts
The Jewish faith and sacred texts are oriented around peace and harmony.

"He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2:4

Contribution to world peace

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"
Psalm 133:1



Texts of Terror
War and violence are part of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish tradition.

"Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war. Stir up the mighty men. Let the warriors advance and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning knives into spears. Let the weak say, "I am strong.""
Joel 4:9-10

Danger of radicalization

"Behold, the day of Adonai comes, cruel, full of wrath and fierce fury [...] Their babes will be dashed in pieces before their eyes. Their houses will be plundered, and their wives ravished."
Isaiah 13:9-16

Internal criticisms of



"Also you shall not oppress a foreigner, for you know the life of a foreigner, seeing you were foreigners in the land of Egypt."
Exodus 23:9

Polarization
Because of the many Jewish denominations, intra- and interreligious dialogue can be very strained. Orthodox communities usually live very secluded from their surroundings, and often refuse to acknowledge the existence of other branches of Judaism as legitimate.

Environmental issues
Judaism, together with Christianity, has been accused of being responsible for the ecological crisis, because it purportedly promotes an uncaring attitude toward nature in the Torah. However, there are also denominations in Judaism that have taken significant steps to revalue nature.

Zionism
There are denominations in Judaism that very strongly defend the State of Israel, and also the politics of the State of Israel. There are also denominations in Judaism that are critical of the politics of the State of Israel and even against Zionism as such.



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